

They proved of great interest, and it is hoped that such exhibitions will become a permanent feature of the annual meetings.

Resolutions were adopted tendering the thanks of the Union to the President and Trustees of the American Museum of Natural History for the courtesies extended to the Union; and to the Linnaean Society of New York for their hospitality shown to the Members during the Ninth Congress.

Through the kindness of Mr. D. G. Elliot, a selected series of drawings, by Wolf of London, were exhibited in the Library of the Museum during the session, these drawings being the originals of Mr. Elliot's 'Birds of North America,' and of his Monographs of the Grouse, Pheasants, etc.

It was voted that the Tenth Congress of the Union should be held in Washington, D. C., Nov. 15, 1892.

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## RECENT LITERATURE.

**The New Nuttall.\*** Thomas Nuttall's 'Manual of the Ornithology of the United States and Canada,' originally published in two volumes in 1832 and 1834, with a second edition of the first volume (Land Birds) in 1840, was a work so charmingly written and so true to nature that it has never ceased to win admiration and serve as an inspiration to bird lovers. While Nuttall was not deeply versed in the technicalities of ornithology, his bird biographies display a profound sympathy with his subject, and an intimate acquaintance with the ways of his beloved feathered associates of field and wood, acquired through a long period of varied and widely extended field experience, during his expeditions as a botanist and explorer to distant and then little known parts of the United States. In addition to his love of bird life and his keen powers of observation, he had the literary gift to portray in a simple yet fascinating way what he saw and heard, without being unduly sentimental or lapsing into exaggeration. In this rests the charm of Nuttall's 'Manual,' the republication of which has been till now delayed, though often seriously contemplated during the many years since it has practically been out of

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\* A | Popular Handbook | of the | Ornithology | of the United States and Canada, | Based on Nuttall's Manual. | By Montague Chamberlain. | [Vignette] Vol. I | The Land Birds. | [Vol. II. Game and Water Birds.] Boston: | Little, Brown and Company. | 1891. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. i-xlvi, 1-473, 1-viii, 1-431, with 2 colored plates and numerous illustrations in the text.

print. During the fifty years which have elapsed since the original publication of the 'Manual' our knowledge of the subject has greatly advanced, and much that Nuttall wrote, including especially his classification and the more technical parts of his work, have become obsolete, while his statements respecting the distribution of some of the species require revision. But his biographies have for the most part lost none of their truthfulness and charm. It is, therefore, a subject of congratulation that the successors of the original publishers of the 'Manual' have decided to reissue the work in a modernized form, eliminating from it the obsolete and erroneous parts and supplementing it by a brief résumé of the advances made since Nuttall's time.

Mr. Chamberlain, to whom was intrusted the preparation of the new edition, has done his work fairly well, considering the limitations by which he was doubtless necessarily restricted by his publishers, the new edition, while more generously illustrated than the original work, containing much less matter. The many pages devoted by Nuttall to general remarks on the higher groups, as orders and families, are wholly discarded, as are his rather elaborate descriptions of the genera and species. Also a number of his species are omitted, for reasons to be given later. Although Nuttall's classification and nomenclature are both very properly eliminated, his arrangement of the species is, with slight exceptions, retained, thus preserving to a great degree the original character and appearance of the 'Manual.'

Of Nuttall we thus have his charming 'Introduction' reproduced nearly in full, and the principal part of his biographies. The new matter consists of new vernacular and technical names, a short diagnosis of generally about three to five lines in small type,—often too brief to be of much importance beyond giving a general idea of the appearance of the bird,—while about five lines more of similar type tell the story of the nest and eggs, aside from the information Nuttall's biographies may chance to give. Nuttall's biographical matter follows next, with at the end, as occasion may require, a few lines, again in smaller type, by Mr. Chamberlain, qualifying or supplementing Nuttall's account, generally relating to the geographical range of the species, as now known.

In general style the new edition, in typographic arrangement, recalls the old, though the size of the paper is larger and the general effect more modern; the illustrations are more numerous and better, some of those made expressly for the work being excellent; others, however, are far from satisfactory. In two instances figures of European species are given in place of figures of the birds they purport to represent (see Vol. II, pp. 86 and 340), and the figure of Wilson's Warbler (Vol. I. p. 167) is misplaced.

Nuttall's 'Manual of the Ornithology of the United States and Canada' was a handbook of the subject as then known. It is hence natural to expect that a 'Popular Handbook of the Ornithology of the United States and Canada, based on Nuttall's Manual,' would be for the present day what Nuttall's 'Manual' was in its day. But alas, while the title-page

implies this, we have a work of far more limited scope, the proper title of which would be a 'Popular Handbook of the Ornithology of Eastern North America, based on Nuttall's Manual.' For, after reading, through three and a half pages of the four and a half pages of 'Preface,' devoted chiefly to an eulogium on Nuttall's original work, we meet the statement that the limits of a handbook compel the omission of "those species which occur only to the westward of the Mississippi valley, though I have endeavored to make mention of every bird that has occurred within this Eastern Faunal Province, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Ocean, and to give their distribution and breeding area so far as these are known." This, then, is the real scope of the work and a correct statement of the nature and extent of the supplementary matter; it also accounts for the small size of the revised Nuttall. It is quite true that "only a few short chapters" of Nuttall "have been lost through restricting the scope of the present work to Eastern forms," but it would seem a little more in the line of strict commercial and scientific integrity to indicate the fact at some point earlier than in the last third of the preface. Indeed, the prospectus issued by the publishers goes so far as to promise "to give the reader the latest acquired facts regarding the species mentioned in the original work, also an account of the species and subspecies that have been discovered since Nuttall wrote," etc., with no intimation anywhere that the work is not a handbook of North American ornithology as implied in the title. The prospectus further implies the presence of many excellent features, "so far elaborated as the limits of a 'hand-book' will permit"—this saving clause covering apparently a large mental reservation.

The book, so far as it goes, is excellent, though not above criticism at many points, not a few of the annotations having an apparently perfunctory character, and being occasionally defective in point of accuracy and completeness, in respect to the ground they purport to cover. Occasionally the spirit of some of the comments is not eminently creditable from the pen of an intelligent ornithologist. The following from the 'Preface' is a case in point where, in contrasting Nuttall's work with that of later workers, we read: "For if a great advance has been made in the study of scientific ornithology,—which term represents only the science of bird-skins, the names by which they are labelled, and the sequence of these names, in other words, the classification of birds,—if this science has advanced far beyond Nuttall's work, the study of bird-life, the real history of our birds, remains just about where Nuttall and his contemporaries left it. The present generation of working ornithologists have been too busy in hunting up new species and in variety-making to study the habits of birds with equal care and diligence, and it is to Wilson and Audubon and Nuttall that we are chiefly indebted even at this day for what we know of bird-life"! Is this, then, the estimate Mr. Chamberlain places on the thousands of pages of field notes published during the last fifteen years by his confrères of the Nuttall Club and the A. O. U.—in the 'Nuttall Bulletin,' 'The Auk,' and the 'O. & O.,' to say nothing of other channels of publication!—J. A. A.